

JOURNAL so that we may share more definitely their experiences. By way of suggestion, a copy of the latest membership list of the Fern Society will be forwarded to them on the chance that they left theirs in Manlius, New York. Perhaps they will be able to see some of the Fern Society members as well as the ferns of the different parts of the country.—R. C. BENEDICT.

ACTIVITIES OF THE BRITISH PTERIDOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—

In looking over some issues of the *British Fern Gazette*, I was interested to note that according to the most recent membership list of their society (1927), their organization numbered exactly one hundred and twenty-two, forty-eight of which are starred as new members since August, 1927. Of this number, only six were non-resident in the British Isles. Of these six, one was South African, one Canadian, one French, and three lived in the United States.

An examination of the tables of contents for the last six numbers (3 years) showed a series of articles practically exclusively concerned with matters relating to varietal forms of local British native ferns. Notwithstanding this, there were a number of items which have more general interest, such as one on insect pests of ferns,—the insects considered are also found in this country. Another article gives the history of the *Cambricum* variety of *Polypodium vulgare* from its first discovery by John Ray and the inclusion under binominal nomenclature as *P. Cambricum* Linnaeus to their present-day recognition of numerous sub-varieties. This suggests two questions, neither of them new: whether our local eastern *Polypodium* is to be considered as separate specifically from the European form; and second, what may be the fundamental basis of the undoubtedly recurrent types of leaf variation, like this ruffling and in-

creased division in the Cambrian type of variety. Regarding the first question, readers are referred to Prof. Fernald's thorough discussion in *Rhodora* (**24**: 125-142. 1922) under the title "Polypodium virginianum and P. vulgare," or to Mr. Weatherby's digest in the *FERN JOURNAL* (**13**: 14, 15. 1923).

In the United States with our younger, broader territory, our interests in fern study are naturally still concerned with the broader taxonomic questions of species differentiation and distribution. In England, these questions ceased to exist as problems long ago. Instead they deal intensively with a multitude of distinct sub-varietal forms of their limited number of native species. With us, our concern with varietal types usually stops with the collection of herbarium material, or perhaps the transplanting of the original form to some backyard fern garden. In England, their interest starts with the discovery of such a new type, and continues with its careful cultivation and propagation. Where the *FERN JOURNAL* may publish an account of the fifty to one hundred fern species native in some single state, the *British Fern Gazette* is likely to deal with an equal number of the varieties of a single species. Among some single species of British ferns, such as the hart's tongue, there have been named and described more varieties than there are distinct species in the whole United States.

This mass of vegetative sports offers a most interesting field for experimental genetic analysis.—R. C. BENEDICT.

"THE WORLD'S GREATEST CURIOSITY."—Some six years ago (vol. 11, p. 122 of this *JOURNAL*) Miss Marshall told of an enterprising tradesman in Toledo, Ohio, who was then selling at 25 cents each, bunches of a dozen or so stems of *Lycopodium lucidulum* under the name of "Aqua, the wonder fern." Recently, Dr. Wherry has